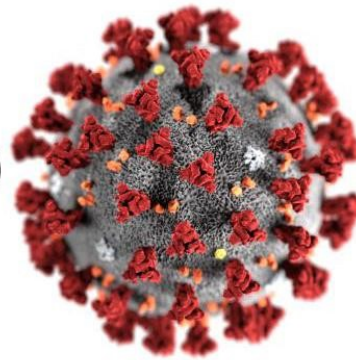




Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)



Household and Office Waste Disposal

What should be done with household and office waste that has come in contact with someone who has the virus?

This fact sheet is intended to provide useful information on disposing of typical household or office waste that may have come into contact with COVID-19 ("the virus"). The information contained in this fact sheet is derived from the best available sources as of June 1, 2020. As research about the virus continues and additional information becomes available, some of the practices identified below may change. **Please contact your local health department and waste hauler for any additional information related to handling waste impacted by COVID-19.**

Background:

COVID-19 is a respiratory tract illness spread person-to-person and, in some cases, can be fatal. Some wastes, including COVID-19 test kits, personal protective equipment, and similar items that are designed to come into contact with the virus, should be separated from other materials as soon as practicable to avoid unnecessary exposure. [Recent studies](#) suggest the virus can last on hard surfaces like plastic and stainless steel for up to 72 hours after exposure, and as long as 24 hours on cardboard after exposure. [Proper cleaning](#) and waste disposal methods can help contain the virus and stop its spread.

Handling and Disposal:

The virus can survive on waste and recyclable materials for up to 72 hours after coming into contact with the virus. Accordingly, you should wear gloves when handling items that may have been impacted by the virus and wash your hands for at least twenty seconds after handling those items. The Centers for Disease Control ("CDC") recommends designating a lined trash bin for wastes generated by someone who has the virus or for wastes from cleaning areas in which a person who has the virus spent time. Virus-contaminated waste and waste from cleaning virus-impacted areas, including masks, can be disposed along with other waste. However, anyone who handles wastes or other items potentially contaminated by the virus should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds afterwards. The CDC also provides guidance on ["Other Considerations"](#).



COVID-19 and Recyclables:

While an infected person is under quarantine, common recyclable materials (e.g., single use bottles, paper, plastic bags, etc.) that may have come in contact with the infected person should be disposed of in a designated trash bin. While recycling is the preferred outlet for these types of items, under the current circumstances disposal may be necessary to help stop the spread of the virus to others. Questions about handling additional waste or recyclables should be directed to your local health department and waste hauler.

Cleaning and Disinfecting:

Paper towels and disinfectant wipes used to clean high-contact areas such as keyboards, doorknobs, and light-switches may be disposed of with other municipal waste. The U.S Environmental Protection Agency has a list of disinfectants to use against the virus [here](#).

Clothing and blankets that have come in contact with the virus do not need to be thrown out. These items may be washed as normal. The CDC advises that these items may be washed with other clothing and should be washed with the warmest water possible for that type of clothing (See "[Linens, clothing, and other items that go in the laundry](#)").

Sharps and COVID-19:

[The Healthcare Waste Institute at the National Waste & Recycling Association](#) recommends using single-use sharps containers for patients with the virus and safely managed in accordance with [Illinois EPA recommendations](#).

Additional Resources on Coronavirus and Impacted Wastes:

[Illinois Department of Public Health](#)

[Center for Disease Control](#)

[Environmental Protection Agency](#)

